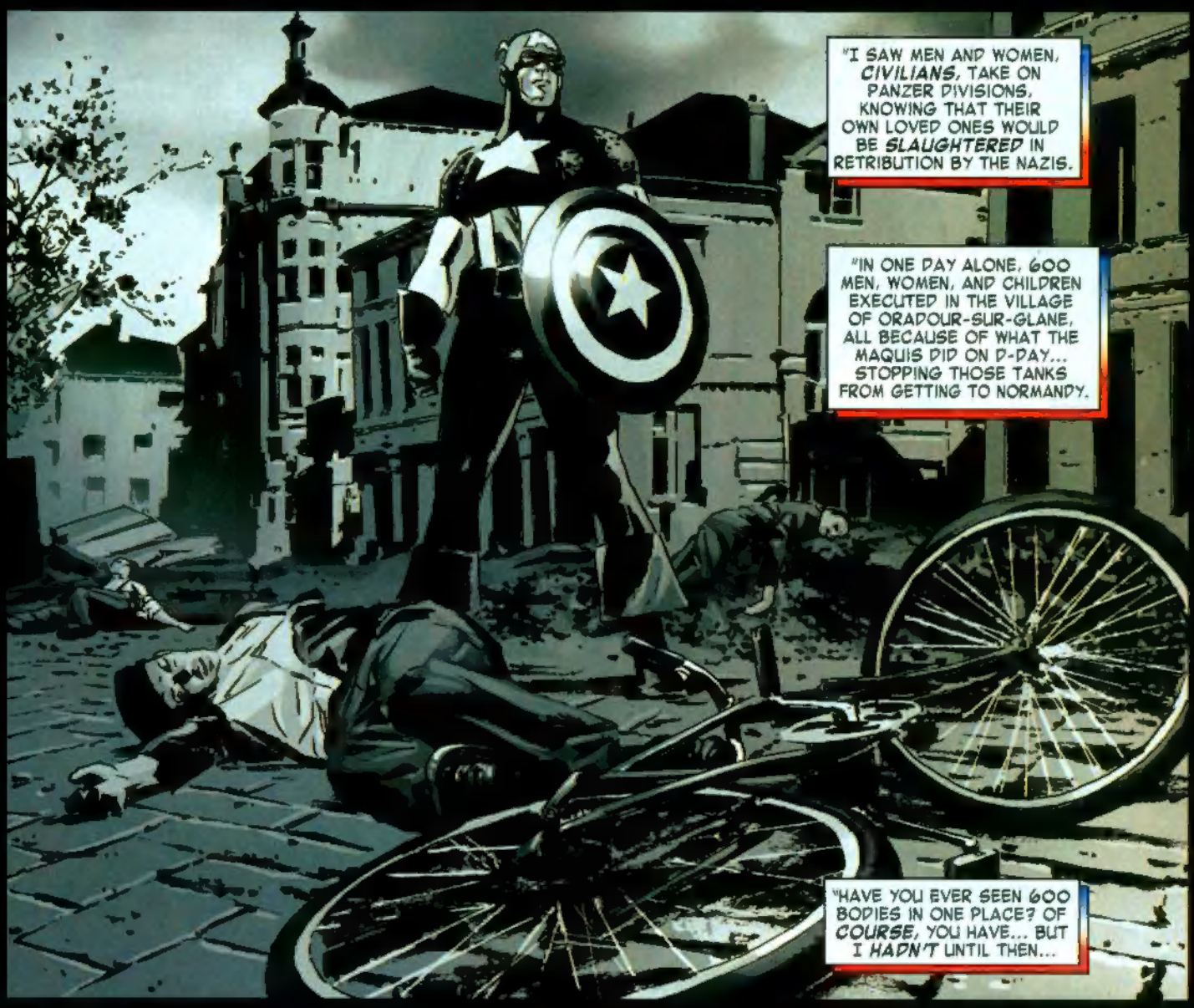
S.H.I.E.L.D. Sub-Carrier--
CURRENTLY OVER THE ATLANTIC OCEAN, MOVING AT TOP SPEED
--ESTIMATED TIME OF ARRIVAL IS ONE HOUR TWENTY MINUTES, SO I WANT TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT HERE.
CONTAINMENT LEVELS, CIVILIAN TRAFFIC, EVERYTHING.
AND SOMEONE GET ME A LINK-UP WITH WHOEVER'S HANDLING THE LONDON TEAM. THEY SHOULD BE INSIDE BY NOW.
YES, MA'AM. I'LL GET ON IT. AGENT HEINBERG HAS BEEN WORKING ON THE DATA FOR OUR STRIKE.
RIGHT. THE TRACE FROM THE SKULL'S RECEIVER APPEARS TO BE TRACKING TO THIS LOCATION. AND IF THE MANHATTAN DEVICE IS ANY INDICATION, IT'LL BE UNDERGROUND...
AND UNFORTUNATELY, THIS IS AVENUE FOCH, ALONG THE CHAMPS-ELYSEES...
PARIS
...SO WE'RE LOOKING AT A SERIOUS TARGET-RICH ENVIRONMENT IF THIS GOES BADLY.
HOLD THAT THOUGHT, HEINBERG. I NEED TO GET SOME TACTICAL INSIGHT.
WALK WITH ME.

"...LET'S JUST HOPE WE'RE IN TIME TO STOP ANYTHING ELSE FROM GOING WRONG."
ADVANCE CHOPPER TO STRIKE LEADER.
GO FOR STRIKE LEADER.
SCANNER SHOWS THE DEVICE ON THE MOVE, AND WE'VE GOT A VISUAL OF THE SCENE...
...LOOKS LIKE OUR TARGET IS MAKING A RUN FOR IT.
METROPO
NO, SOMEONE ELSE IS TRYING TO GET IN ON THE ACTION...THAT'S AN A.I.M. HOVER-JET.
THE SKULL'S MEN DON'T WORK FOR THEM ANYMORE.

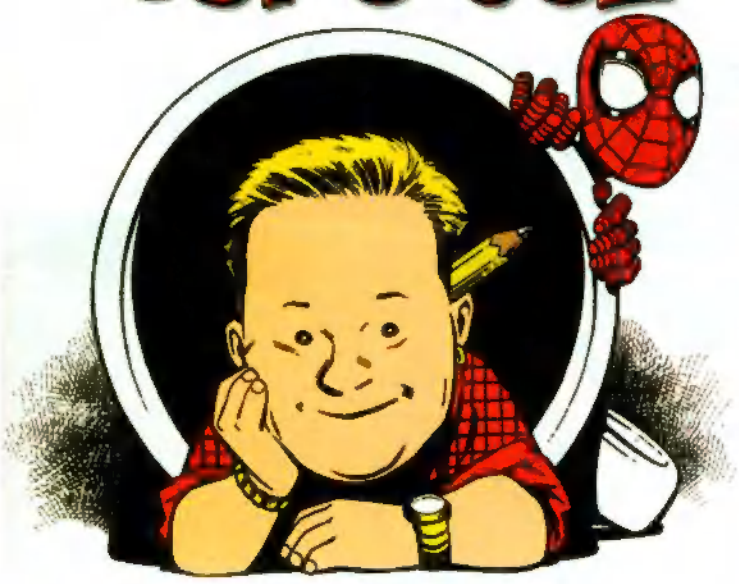
OPEN FIRE! KILL HIM!
KRAKK RAKK RAK BLAM KRAKK RAK RAK BLAM

"...SO WE WORKED OUR WAY UP FROM THE SOUTH AND MET WITH LEADERS FROM THE *MAQUIS* TO HELP PLAN THE ATTACK.
"I'VE SEEN A LOT OF COMBAT...AND I'D SEEN A LOT BEFORE I GOT TO FRANCE...
"...BUT THE SAVAGERY INFLICTED ON THESE PEOPLE. I NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE IT UNTIL WE GOT TO *BUCHENWALD*.
"THAT'S WHY IT REALLY GALLS ME WHEN I HEAR MY OWN PEOPLE DISMISSING THE FRENCH AS COWARDS.
"WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A PEOPLE WHO *NEVER* GAVE UP FIGHTING THE NAZI OCCUPATION. THEIR COUNTRY MAY HAVE SURRENDERED, BUT *THEY* DIDN'T...


"I SAW MEN AND WOMEN, *CIVILIANS*, TAKE ON PANZER DIVISIONS, KNOWING THAT THEIR OWN LOVED ONES WOULD BE *SLAUGHTERED* IN RETRIBUTION BY THE NAZIS.
"IN ONE DAY ALONE, 600 MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN EXECUTED IN THE VILLAGE OF ORADOUR-SUR-GLANE, ALL BECAUSE OF WHAT THE MAQUIS DID ON D-DAY... STOPPING THOSE TANKS FROM GETTING TO NORMANDY.
"HAVE YOU EVER SEEN 600 BODIES IN ONE PLACE? OF *COURSE*, YOU HAVE... BUT I *HADN'T* UNTIL THEN...

"SO, WE WERE *PROUD* TO HELP THEM TAKE BACK PARIS.
"THE *VICTORY PARADE* CAME RIGHT DOWN THIS WAY AND UP THROUGH THE CHAMPS-ELYSEES. MY FRIENDS AND I WATCHED FROM THE SIDELINES..."

CUP O' JOE



Big news, True Believers!

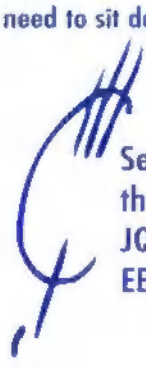
I recently had a dizzying discussion about BLACK PANTHER with a rabid reporter from the New York Times. That's right, bunky, the world's most premier and respected newspaper is covering our newest release chronicling the adventures of T'Challa and the wondrous world of Wakanda!

So, from the pages of the Times of New York to the boulevards of Hollywood we shall go. The start of '05 will bring us not one, but two West Coast luminaries who'll be sinking their celluloid teeth into the world that is Marvel. Acclaimed scribe and director Reginald Hudlin (*House Party, Boomerang, Bernie Mac Show*) and certified Marvel genius John Romita, Jr. promise us a BLACK PANTHER story for the ages, and I personally guarantee you all that there will be events happening in BLACK PANTHER that will effect the Marvel U in *MAJOR* ways in the months to come.

Then from the movies we jump to TV where renowned writer Allan Heinberg (*The O.C., Sex and the City*) gives us the newest title in our "Marvel Next" initiative and what has been called the most anticipated comic of 2005, THE YOUNG AVENGERS! Joining Allan is "Young Gun," Jim Cheung (hey, say that ten times fast, it's fun and it rhymes). Mark my words, this will prove to be Jim's breakout title and everyone's favorite comic by year's end! It's already mine!

Speaking of "Marvel Next," let's not forget the return of Brian K. Vaughan and Adrian Alphona's critically acclaimed RUNAWAYS, you cats have been asking for it and here it is, so enough with the letters already! And finally, before I pass out from hyperventilation, let me introduce another brand new edition to the Marvel U, LIVEWIRES by the legendary Adam Warren.

Whoa, I need to sit down!



See ya in
the funnybooks,
JQ
EEK!

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH

This issue's letters page has a few more notes from friends who got an advance peek at issue 1, but we've also got a few readers whose e-mail got in just under the wire, too. This month also sees the return of the "Question of the Month" which was begun under the late Mark Gruenwald's editorial reins, and something I always dug—a little peek behind the scenes at the people who make this book for you. Anyway, on to the letters...

Holy Smokes! That was one FINE comic book I just got done reading. I tell you, nothing like Ed Brubaker to come in and make you feel completely inadequate. When I finished my recent four-issue run on CAPTAIN AMERICA, I was dreading reading this first issue. Way to make all my fears a reality. This issue made ME forget my run on Cap. Truly stunning work. Red Skull, the Cosmic Cube, Sharon Carter—this is some solid Captain America goodness. And that Steve Epting, what a talent this guy is. The death of the Red Skull has never been prettier. I can't wait for more!

Robert Kirkman

There are so many openings for jokes in that letter, but sadly none of them are for all-ages eyes, so instead, I will just say thanks for the kind words and tell you all to check out Robert's MARVEL TEAM-UP book for over-the-top super hero fun like I could never write if I tried.

Now THIS is what a CAPTAIN AMERICA comic should be...!

Brubaker's script feels both classic and brand new. That's a tough tightrope to walk, but Ed is as skilled a circus performer as we've got in the mainstream. In one issue, his insights into Cap's character already have me hooked. Not to mention, the Red Skull has NEVER seemed so menacing as he does here. And what a cliffhanger...! This is how all super hero comics should be done.

On the art side: this is the work of Epting's career. The action sequence with Cap on the train is like the storyboards to a CAPTAIN AMERICA movie I'd pay full price to see. But it's the quiet moments, the emotions that I read on the faces of Cap, Sharon, General Lukin, even the Skull... there are entire stories being told in those expressions.

I'm down for this series. Probably my favorite Marvel book of the year. I think Steve Englehart would be proud.

Joe Casey

And another bout of too many kind words, but we will, of course, accept them. And tell you to search out for Joe's many fine works, including the AVENGERS: EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES series, out currently.

Congratulations on a great first issue. Terrific story—loads of action and intrigue. Character moments galore. And Steve reminds us once again what a loss *El Cazador* was. Hope to see you both on this one for a good long time.

Ed, I can see where you think you'll p*$$ off a lot of readers with the developments of the first issue. Like a lot of readers, I was enjoying your take on the Red Skull, and looking forward to seeing what you two would do with one of Marvel's best baddies...and, then, of course, you got me. It was frustrating—reminded me of *The Godfather*, where Luca Brasi gets this huge buildup as Don Corleone's machine of terror, only to wind up sleeping with the fishes before we can ever see him in action. But you know, it felt right. It reminded me of what Bendis did after DAREDEVIL 50—clearing the decks, putting the whole Kingpin/Elektra/Bullseye thing aside and moving on. I grew up with Cap and the Skull and the Cosmic Cube, and I know that some other team will revive him someday, but I'm more than ready to move on with you.

Jeb D.
(via e-mail)

You can expect to see me and Steve on this book for a good long time, Jeb. And as you saw this issue, the Skull isn't the only one sleeping with the fishes. With a book that has this much history, a take-no-prisoners approach seemed like the way to go to put people on notice that just about anything could happen here.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: What's the best book you've read lately?

Ed Brubaker: *Dress Your Children In Corduroy and Denim* by David Sedaris

Steve Epting: *The Requiem Shark* by Nicholas Griffin

Michael Lark: *The Onion Field* by Joseph Wambaugh and old reprints of "Scorchy Smith" comic strips by Noel Sickles

Frank D'Armata: Cliff's Notes on CAPTAIN AMERICA

Molly Lazer: *The Plot Against America* by Philip Roth and *Mirror Mirror* by Gregory Maguire

Andy Schmidt: *Point of Impact* by Stephen Hunter and *Brotherhood of the Rose* by David Morrell. They're both great action thrillers, very entertaining and smart.

Nicole Wiley: *The Devil In The White City* by Erik Larson (...but not Image's Erik Larsen...) Thanks, Mom.

Tom Brevoort: *Fortress of Solitude* by Jonathan Lethem. But I would have read old reprints of "Scorchy Smith" if only I had any.

I read CAPTAIN AMERICA #1 last night, and I was very surprised to see what happened.

First of all, the setup for the story is an interesting one. Evil men plotting a possible trade of "toys", but one man tells another that his toy is not for giving. This sets up the motivating greed of the story. I see the General being a huge part of the tale. The Red Skull monologue after the planned barter was very creepy. It reminds me of how Ed uses villains in his other works where they are bad people but human at the same time. The last page was a killer in a literal sense. It is definitely one of the best last pages in Ed's career.

The best part, though, was the Sharon Carter/Cap conversation. Like the Falcon in Priest's magnificent Cap/Falcon series, Sharon asks the questions to the icon that no one else can. The familiarity and comfort former lovers bring to one another brings home the issues that Cap has lost a lot recently and he might lose himself in his job to overcompensate for his losses. Will Steve forget who he is or will Sharon have to remind him? So far, I have great hope that the series will be a great read.

Frank Davis
Chicago, IL

Sharon Carter was a personal favorite of mine, and I'm really glad to get to use her in this capacity. Thank you, Mark Waid, for saving her from the abyss.

Wow! I want to call Ed Brubaker Barry Bonds and Steve Epting Randy Johnson because Ed just blasted this one out of the park while Steve pitched a perfect game. Everything about this issue lived up to the potential I thought it had when I first heard the news of Brubaker/Epting on CAPTAIN AMERICA, when I saw the first cover, when I gazed at the first panel of interior art, when I read the first line of dialogue, and now that I've finished the first issue the potential is completely realized. I can't get over the wonderful misdirection that works to suck even the most fair-weather fan of Steve Rogers in faster than Sammy Sosa can self-promote. Because, I mean, honestly, who doesn't know the classic Red Skull/Cosmic Cube story? They always stress in this business the importance of having a fantastic first issue and well, round your bases and give your mates a hi-five at home plate, because volume 5 is everything CAPTAIN AMERICA should have been for the last ten years. It's like the Red Sox winning the World Series all over again. The curse is over! I BELIEVE!

Derek Haller
(via e-mail)

Thanks, Derek. I'm not that much of a sports guy, outside of curling, of course, so you lost me on some of this. You're talking about Australian Rules Football, right?

That's all for this month. But keep those cards and letters coming, folks. Send them to mheroes@marvel.com or to the address below, and make sure to mark all letters "okay to print."

Seeya next time!

Ed Brubaker

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